

The Battle of Hawkins Lab by pshort863

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Summary: What if Hopper's calls for help were answered? An unlikely entity comes to the aid of the group in an alternate ending full of action and suspense.

The Battle of Hawkins Lab

"Room! Atten-Hut!" The Sergeant said as the Colonel and the Major walked in.

The entire room, filled from wall to wall, snapped to attention.

"As you were," the Colonel said walking to map in front of the room.

"I wonder what this shit's about?" Corporal Jacob Townes said in a low voice.

"No idea," Corporal Korey Mason rebutted.

"Gentlemen, as of eighteen-hundred hours local time we lost all contact with the Department of Energy's lab in Hawkins." . . .

Almost all of the faces of the soldiers in the packed room drained of color as they remembered the events of the previous year at Hawkins Middle School. The grotesque scene of soldiers and government workers half eaten by what they could only describe as a monster was still fresh on their minds.

. . . "Your officers have been thoroughly briefed on the present situation and will fill in any blanks I leave out," The Colonel continued, "The lab's billet of MPs was overrun by an unknown force from within the compound and the only contact we've had has been from the local sheriff in Hawkins." . . .

"Is this making any sense?" Mason whispered

"Nope," Townes returned.

. . . "This lab and its personnel are vital, I repeat, vital to our national security. The work they've done at that facility is strictly classified and will only be handed down to you on a need- to-know basis. At the same time I must tell you all to forget what you may think is real or imaginative." . . .

Everyone in the whole room simultaneously exchanged glances at one another trying to understand the Colonel's meaning.

. . .". Your mission is to liberate the facility, rescue and recover the staff, and collect any data you may find. Keep sharp and remember nothing short of our national security is at stake."

"Atten-Hut!" A sergeant bellowed as the Colonel and the Major left the room, "All you men

grab your gear, and report to the flight line!"

"I still don't have a damn clue what's going on," Townes said picking up his rifle.

"Neither do I brother," Said Mason.

"Look on the bright side fellas," Sergeant Michael Parks said using the butt of his machine gun to open the door to the flight line, "Looks like we're gonna fuck some shit up this time instead of being the clean-up crew."

Mason and Townes just looked at each other in worry as they made their way to the five waiting helicopters outside.

With a roar, the helicopters took off one by one into night sky. All fifty of the men inside were restless inside the cramped aircraft.

"How far out is it Captain?" Parks yelled over the rotor wash to the officer sitting across from him.

"About thirty minutes Sergeant. We are going to link up with the sheriff on the outskirts of the town. The rest of the choppers are gonna establish a perimeter around the lab under Lieutenant Welsh," Captain Tom Montgomery yelled back.

"What are we up against, sir?" Townes asked.

"The only thing I know is that the sheriff called us and said some mutant 'dogs' attacked and killed most of the staff at the lab. Judging on what happened last year out here I'm not

ruling anything out. You all remember that?"

Townes and the rest of the squad in the helicopter shook their heads warily as they

remembered the blood bath they responded to at Hawkins Middle School. Many of the soldiers killed that night were transferred from their company.

"Irregardless, stay on alert and brass check all weapons," Montgomery said chambering a round into his rifle.

The rest of the squad followed suit as the helicopter made a sharp turn toward the lights of the town of Hawkins in the distance.

"Looks like this is the place sir," Townes said pointing toward a house at the end of the long gravel driveway.

"Alright you men, stay vigilant. Let's see if we can find this sheriff," the Captain said as the men formed two lines on the road approaching the house with weapons raised.

"This is some eery shit man," Mason said tapping Townes on the shoulder.

"Got that right. Wish we knew what we're up. . . ." Townes stopped talking suddenly throwing his fist up in the air telling the entire squad to halt.

"What do you see Corporal?" Montgomery asked running up beside him with the house in full view now.

"Movement inside. Unknown number," Townes said looking down the sights of his rifle.

"Move up to the vehicles parked in front. Safety's off. All weapons covering the house," Montgomery ordered and the ten men quickly took their positions.

"Must be doing something right this is the sheriff's truck," Mason said to the Captain.

"Yeah looks like the right place. I gotta try and make contact. Mason

on me," and with that Montgomery and Mason moved cautiously to the front door.

"United States Army, anyone in here?" Mason said after three loud blows to the door with his fist.

Immediately there were multiple startled shrieks from within.

"Christ, sounds like there's kids in there sir," Mason said in a low voice.

Mason was about to hit the door again when it suddenly swung open and a large man in

surgical scrubs opened the door.

"Took you all long enough. Jim Hopper, Sheriff of Hawkins," he said holding out his hand

to the two soldiers.

"Captain Tom Montgomery, Sheriff. You talked to my boss on the phone," he said shaking Hopper's hand.

"Please tell me you have more men than this?" Hopper said with a worried expression on his face.

"Yes sir, we have fifty. This is just my small patrol to come get you," he motioned to his

squad who were now walking toward them lowering their weapons, "The rest of them are securing a perimeter around the lab as we speak."

"Good because we are gonna need all of the help we can get if we are gonna seal that gate," Hopper said lighting a cigarette.

"What do you mean we and what gate are you talking about?"

"Look Captain I don't know how much you know about this town and this lab but a year ago. . ."

"I'm well aware of what occurred here last year Sheriff. Most of those men were under my command at one point," Montgomery interrupted, "I'm well aware of the risks and the unknowns that keep coming from that place."

"Well Captain then you know the need to shut this thing down," Hopper said taking a long draw of his cigarette seeing the anguished look on the Captain's face after reminiscing of the events of the previous year, "You and your boys come inside and I'll show you all I know."

"Form a perimeter nothing gets in or out!" Lieutenant Dakota Welsh commanded over the rotor wash as the last of the helicopters dropped the last of the soldiers in the field next to the lab, "M60s covering all exits and I want four men at the front gate!"

The forty men scrambled into position. Some took cover beside vehicles, some beside pillars, and some lay on the ground in front of the building, all their weapons trained on the building.

Horrid animalistic shrieks filled the air from inside the building filling each of the soldiers with a sense of fear and confusion. Through dim lights the men could see strange figures inside but could not positively identify them.

"Lieutenant I don't know what the hell I'm looking at here," a sergeant said looking through the sights of his machine gun trained on the front door.

"Keep your weapon trained on that door Sergeant. If anything comes out you light it the fuck up you understand me?" Welsh ordered looking through his binoculars at the shapes moving inside. "Our job is to secure this area until the captain can get us more intelligence. Understand?"

"Guys it's okay they've come to help. Come on out," Hopper said as the men of Captain Montgomery's squad cautiously entered the house.

Slowly Mike, Lucas, Dustin, Max, Steve, Jonathan, Nancy, and Joyce all appeared out of an adjacent room. They gasped when they saw the soldiers.

"Christ Captain, you and your men can relax. We aren't your enemy here," Hopper said gesturing to his men's half-raised weapons.

"Right. Weapons safe men. Parks you and Townes hang back and watch that road. If anything's coming this way I want to know, understood?" Montgomery ordered.

"Okay that's better. Sorry if we aren't too trusting of you Captain but we do ha. . . ."

"Like when they were trying to kill us?" Dustin interjected causing Lucas to elbow him in the ribs.

"Well, yeah to put it bluntly," Hopper agreed, "What are your intentions here Captain?"

"I was ordered by my battalion commander to bring part of my company to liberate or rescue the lab and kill the threat using whatever information you may have. I'm not here to kill or arrest anyone."

"You sure about that Captain? El, come in here." Hopper said raising his voice.

Eleven walked into the room uneasy and into the protecting hands of Mike who held her. Captain Montgomery's eyes widened with surprise as he took his helmet off shaking his head in amazement.

"You've had her this whole time haven't you Sheriff?" Montgomery quipped.

"Yeah I have. Only to keep her from guys like you to give her a normal life away from that

damn lab!" Hopper said turning to look at the captain face to face.

"Take it easy Sheriff. I'm not here for her. There are people looking for her but not us. We are here to help. Take it or leave it but I hope

you take it because we need anything you have that can help us," Montgomery said looking Hopper back in the face.

"Alright Captain. We'll see. Here's what we have. Dustin bring that thing in here"

"The Demadog?" Dustin asked.

"What the hell's a Demadog?" Mason asked leaning against the wall.

"It doesn't matter what it's called will you just go get the damn thing?!" Hopper said to Dustin aggravated.

"Are you referring to the mutant dogs we were briefed on?" Montgomery asked puzzled.

"Yeah but I can't explain them you just have to see it for yourself," Hopper said pointing at

Dustin as he struggled to carry the dead creature before dropping it on the table in front of them all.

"That's the ugliest damn dog I've ever seen," Mason said.

"What is this thing something they created or something like last year from the. . ."

"Upside-down?" Mike asked.

"Yeah. . . the upside down?" Montgomery asked puzzled.

"They're from there and they killed everyone in the whole lab. Everyone including Bob," Joyce said tearing up.

"I'm sorry ma'am," Montgomery said warily, "Who's Bob?"

"Bob was a good guy and was seeing Joyce. These bastards killed him after he saved us all

at the lab," Hopper said lighting another cigarette.

"I don't see any bullet wounds. How did this one die?" Mason asked examining the carcass.

"El killed it," Hopper said taking a long draw.

"Shit I'm glad she's on our side Captain," Mason said chuckling causing the other soldiers in the room to grin nervously.

"The dogs are being led by this entity the kids call the shadow monster. It's got all of these

living tunnels throughout town that they can travel through," Hopper informed.

"And that's where Will comes in," Joyce said pointing to the bedroom down the hall.

"Who's Will?" Montgomery asked.

"Will is Joyce's son. You may remember him as the one that the monster from last year took that your people tried to cover up," Jonathan said, "I'm his brother."

"Anyway," Hopper interrupted annoyed, "this shadow monster is using him too to spy on us and the general population to prevent anyone from closing the gateway in the lab."

"So if the gateway is shut then the dogs die and the monster is basically finished," Montgomery said trying to understand.

"In a nutshell yes. But this would also kill Will but we have that taken care of. Joyce and a few of the kids are going to take him to my cabin where he won't know where he is and try to get whatever that monster put in him out before we close the gate," Hopper said.

"And just how are you gonna do that? I'm a medic I can help," Mason asked.

"Yes Mason is a very good medic. He can help," Montgomery agreed.

"Yes he can come. Will told me that it likes to stay cool so if we expose Will's body to heat it

hopefully will get out of him," Joyce said.

"Alright then it's agreed. Mason will go with you guys to make sure he stays medically stable and to keep us updated through our radios. That still doesn't explain how we are going to close this gate Sheriff," Montgomery asked lighting his own cigarette now.

"That's where I come in," El said in a quiet voice.

"And how is that Hun?" Montgomery asked.

"She is the one that opened the gate while she was there at the lab Captain. She's the only one that can close it," Hopper said defensively.

"Alright. Alright. Here's what I see we have to do," Montgomery said grabbing a piece of paper and a marker. "Here's the lab and here's my boys. We are already familiar with the interior so we don't have to worry too much about that. When we get there I will personally lead you, Sheriff, and El down to the gate and cover her with a squad from any of those dogs."

"That's never gonna work!" Mike said.

"Why is that son?" Montgomery asked.

"There are too many of them. You'll all be killed!"

"He does have a point there is a lot of them and they killed everyone in that building," Hopper said.

"What about a diversion?" Steve chimed in.

"What kind of diversion?" Hopper asked.

"What if we used one of the tunnels as a diversion. It's an extension of the shadow monster so if we set it on fire or something most of the dogs will be sent to deal with that!"

"That's actually a very good idea. I will send a platoon under Lieutenant Welsh with flamethrowers to that area and they can keep them occupied while we get you guys down to the gate," Montgomery said, "Is everyone clear on their task?"

"What about us we want to help!" Mike beckoned.

"You're not going it's too dangerous," Hopper quickly interjected.

"Absolutely, but I can't leave you here either," Montgomery said walking over to the door, "Townes get in here I need the radio."

Townes walked inside and took off his backpack radio on the table.

"Get me two choppers to this location Corporal and inform Lieutenant Welsh we will be there within the half hour," Montgomery ordered.

"So what, we get to sit here and do nothing while you guys put your lives' on the line?" Max

asked frustrated.

"No. You guys are going to go by one of my choppers to the sheriff's cabin and you're going

to take care of your friend. He needs you more and that's where I need you. Mason here is going with you," Montgomery sympathized.

"What about me? Use me to take the team to the tunnels," Steve said.

The captain looked at Hopper who nodded in approval. "Alright. You get on the chopper with me and I'll link you up with Lieutenant Welsh. You understand I can't guarantee your safety?"

"Yeah I know," Steve said picking up the bat riddled with nails.

"Choppers inbound sir," Townes relayed from the radio.

"I've never been in a helicopter before! This is awesome!" Dustin yelled over the rotors at Mike who was staring out the open door at the other chopper El was in, "She's gonna be okay Mike," he said in a more somber tone.

"You don't know that! You weren't there!" Mike said with tears welling up in his eyes.

"Mike calm down she's literally got an army around her," Lucas said.

"I just can't lose her again," Mike said to himself and looked over at the other helicopter that seemed so far away yet so close.

"He'll be there for you when you get back El," Hopper said seeing her staring at the other helicopter.

"You won't let me see him. You never let me see him," She said as tears filled her eyes but she refused to face him.

"I was trying to protect you. I don't expect you to understand," Hopper said rather sternly.

"You're right I don't! I don't understand!" she screamed facing him and hitting him in the chest with her fists.

"Alright! Alright!" he said grabbing her arms. "I just couldn't take the thought of something happening to you and losing you. I couldn't let that happen to me again," he said releasing her arms.

"Again?" she questioned.

"Yes again. Not again like Sarah," he said in a lower voice barely able to hear over the rotors.

"Who is Sarah?" El asked.

"She was my girl and I lost her," he said fighting back the tears.

"Lost her?"

"She got sick and went away and you helped patch a big part of the hole that's been in my heart ever since. I don't mean to be mean or hateful to you but when I see you take these risks I can't help but lose it because I don't want to lose that again," Hopper said wiping his eyes.

El took his hand. "You have to trust me."

"I will but you have to promise me that you'll trust me too when I try

to protect you," he said.

"I will," she said wiping her eyes.

"And I don't completely hate this new look by the way. It's very. . . "

"Bitchin'?" she asked with a grin.

"Okay. Yeah. It's pretty bitchin'," he said with a smile putting his hand around her.

She couldn't help but smile and laid her head on his chest but still looking out the window at Mike's helicopter.

"Captain I have command on the radio for you," Townes said handing the microphone to Montgomery sitting on the other side of Hopper and El.

Hopper watched the captain's expression turn from confident to concerned as the conversation ended.

"What's wrong Captain?" He asked.

"There's a new wrinkle in our plan," Montgomery said tossing the microphone back to Townes.

"And what do you mean by that?" Hopper asked annoyed.

"Command has designated the lab as too much of a threat to national security so we have until 05:00 to close that gate or else the air force is gonna wipe it off of the face of the earth."

"That's less than two hours from now Captain!" Hopper said looking at his watch.

"I'm aware of that Sheriff their mind is made up. There's nothing I can do," Montgomery said solemnly.

"Goddammit," Hopper said under his breath looking at El making sure she didn't hear any

the news.

"Two minutes out!" the pilot yelled back.

The two helicopters then separated and began descending to their target locations.

"What's the situation Lieutenant?" Montgomery said in Welsh's ear as the others exited the helicopter.

"Everything's ready to go as ordered sir. I have my team here ready to go to the tunnel."

"Good job Welsh. This young man is going to guide you," Montgomery said grabbing Steve by the shoulder, "See that he doesn't get hurt."

"Yes sir! Come on man," Welsh and his men hurried with Steve in tow to the waiting helicopter and within a minute they were gone.

"Alright let's get this started," Montgomery said looking at Hopper, "All we have to do now is wait for the others to get that thing out of the boy."

"Let's hope they're quick about it. We only have an hour until those bombs drop," Hopper said checking his watch.

"I'm going to check on my boys and get the team together I want to go inside with," Montgomery said heading toward the soldiers still surrounding the lab, "Townes you and Parker stay with the Sheriff and El. They're your responsibility."

"Yes sir!" they both said simultaneously.

"Alright put him here Mr. Mason," Joyce said motioning toward the bed in the center of the cabin, "The rest of you help me with these heaters."

"Mom are you sure about this?" Jonathan said worried.

"I want that son of a bitch out of him!" she snarled causing looks of alarm from all in the room, "Now help me tie his wrists down."

Jonathan obeyed and tied his left wrist down while Mason tied the right. They both exchanged looks of worry.

"So you're a medic, huh?" Jonathan implied.

"That's right, for the past six years now," Mason confirmed.

"I'm glad you're hear Mr. Mason," Jonathan said.

"Call me Korey. If we aren't friends after tonight I don't know what we'd call it," Mason chuckled.

"We need to hurry!" Mike interrupted worried about El.

After the restraints were secured Mason and Jonathan nodded to Joyce who then turned on all of the heaters pointed directly at Will. Almost immediately he regained consciousness.

"W-what's going on? Where am I?! Let me go! Let me go!" he screamed fighting his restraints.

"Will it's me it's Mommy we're hear to help," Joyce said in a calm voice as the heaters became excruciatingly warm.

"It burns! It burns! You're hurting me! Let me go!" Will screamed in agony.

"I can't watch this," Dustin said stepping out the cabin's front door.

"Me neither," said Lucas who left with Max in tow but Mike stayed frozen in place with tears welling up in his eyes.

"You're hurting him! Stop it!" Jonathan said lunging forward trying to turn off one of the

heaters before being stopped by Mason.

"It's the only way kid. I'm not going to let anything bad happen to your brother," he said with his hands on Jonathan's shoulders.

"We need more heat," Joyce said turning the heaters to their highest setting.

"N-N-No! Stop it! St-Stop it! I'm burning up!" Will continued to shout but this time the veins in his neck and face were turning black.

"Jesus Christ!" Mason said shocked.

After a few muffled yells a shadow escaped from Will's mouth and smashed through the cabin window into the darkness of the night.

"What the hell was that?! Was that it?!" Dustin said running into the cabin with Lucas and Max following.

"Will? Will baby can you hear me?" Joyce said taking her son's hand.

"Come on Will speak to us!" Jonathan said taking his other hand.

Slowly Will opened his eyes and a look of confusion came over his face. "M-Mom? J-Jonathan?" he said weakly.

"Y-yes baby it's me and Jonathan!" she said elated and took him into her arms as Jonathan untied his restraints.

The rest of the room erupted in happy cheers and the rest of the teens swarmed their friend talking at the same time.

"Oscar Three Mike this is Echo Three Mike, the package is safe. I repeat the package is safe. Green light to close the gate. Green light!" Mason said over the radio.

"Solid copy Echo Three Mike! Hold your current position and provide security. I'll get back to you as soon as I can, out," Montgomery said eagerly over the radio.

"Will ok?" El asked the Captain.

"Yes ma'am he is now it's show time. You up for this?" the captain asked the girl.

"Yes," she said confidently.

"Okay now time for our diversion. Townes notify Lieutenant Welsh to begin firing the tunnel," Montgomery commanded, "My strike team

prepare to move in, the rest of you maintain security outside. If we are not back before 05:00 clear the blast area!"

"El you stay no more than two feet from me but you save your strength and let me and the Captain's men do the heavy lifting," Hopper said chambering a round into his rifle.

"Are you sure this is the place Steve?" Lieutenant Welsh asked.

"Of course I'm sure! How many times do I have to tell you?" he asked the nervous Lieutenant.

"Alright. Boys we have our orders. Everyone in the hole," he ordered.

As the last of the nine men entered the tunnel Steve bent down to follow.

"Whoa there where do you think you're goin son?" Welsh asked.

"What are you serious? I'm going with you!" Steve said annoyed, "It's your job to protect me and I sure as hell am not waiting out here to see if you or them dogs come out first!"

"Alright fine but take this you may need it," Welsh relented handing Steve his sidearm, "You do know how to use it?"

"No not really?" he said gingerly taking the gun from the Lieutenant's hand.

"Here," Welsh said rolling his eyes and cocking the pistol, "Now its loaded. Just point and shoot but for God's sake shoot in the right direction."

"Shoot in the right direction?. . . Asshole," Steve mocked following them into the tunnel.

They walked a short distance before they came to an area where the tunnel seemed to be alive with vines growing in every direction.

"Alright here's where we make our stand boys. Set up both the machine guns here and be ready to pour hellfire in that direction," he

said pointing in the direction of the lab, "Get those flamethrowers up here!"

Two men with back pack flamethrowers moved in front of the rest of the men and began torching the vines causing them to shriek and curl in anguish. The soldiers continued to burn them until a substantial area of the tunnel was ablaze in the direction of the lab. The shrieks of the vines continued.

"God be with us now," Welsh said under his breath, "Radio the captain and tell him to begin his assault."

"Go Go Go!" Montgomery ordered as nine of his best men stormed the main entrance followed by himself.

"Clear!" Townes said in a low voice.

"Okay come on," Montgomery motioned to El and Hopper who then followed them into the lab.

"They're diversion must be working there was movement in here earlier," Montgomery said unknowingly stepping over the body of Bob.

"Jesus, lets just hope it keeps working," Hopper said eyeing Bob's half-eaten body.

As they continued through the lab the scene became more and more grizzly as they saw the mutilated remains of lab technicians and soldiers scattered everywhere. Still they pressed onward determined to reach their objective.

"Sir we have a live one here!" Parks exclaimed going down the stairway.

"Dr. Owens?" Hopper said surprised to see him alive, "They really got you didn't they?"

A soldier was placing a field dressing on a wound on the doctor's leg.

"Private get this man out of here and to a medic outside,"

Montgomery ordered the soldier.

As the soldier and Dr. Owens began their ascent to safety he was caught off guard as El came out from behind the captain and sheriff.

"Oh you remember Eleven?" Hopper said putting his arm around the doctor, "She's been staying with me. I've been trying to give her a life away from all of the needles and doctors she's known her whole life. If we make it out of this maybe you can help her be able to live a normal life without worry."

Dr. Owens shook his head in agreement and continued his agonizing ascent to safety.

"Let's move, only thirty minutes left gentlemen," Montgomery ordered looking at his watch.

"Oh shit you hear that?" Steve asked hearing a low roar coming from the now smoldering tunnel.

"We all do son," Welsh said taking a knee raising his rifle, "Machine gunners stand by. Everyone hold your fire."

All of the men in the tunnel had their weapons raised in the eery darkness toward the smoldering fog that made the scene something out of a horror movie. The two machine gunners lying beside each other exchanged concerned glances while the other six breathed heavily down the sights of their rifles. Steve pointed his pistol with a shaky hand.

With a roar a multitude of creatures emerged from the fog running in a full sprint toward the men.

"Fire!" Welsh ordered and a hellacious torrent of automatic gunfire engulfed the creatures.

Muzzle flashes lit up the tunnel as if it were daylight. The roars of the creatures were now shrouded by the steady tattoo of the machine guns. Steve blindly fired his pistol not knowing if he was hitting anything growing more and more confident in holding a gun. The bodies of the creatures began to pile up almost to the point of

creating a wall between the creatures and the soldiers but steadily they kept coming relentlessly. The barrels of the machine guns glowed red- hot but continued to fire.

"Grenades! Use your Grenades!" Lieutenant Welsh ordered heaving one of his into the wall of advancing creatures.

Soon the rest of the soldiers followed suit followed by loud bangs that showered them with the blood and gore of the creatures.

"Here it is Captain," Hopper pointed to the portal which was now extended into a deep dive into the ground.

"Alright lower me and my boys to the bottom and we will kill anything that tries to come back and stop you," Montgomery said, "And Hopper, El? Good luck. It's been an honor."

Hopper hit the mechanism and lowered the captain and the nine soldiers to the bottom of the chasm. They immediately set up defensive positions overlooking the tunnel coming into the lab.

"Alright El, you ready?" he said putting his hands on her shoulders.

"I'm ready," she said determined and walked onto the lift.

Hopper lowered the lift half way and nodded to El who in turn raised her hand and began closing the portal ever so slightly. The portal fought back causing her to strain. This was going to be a tough battle.

"Keep up the fire boys! Keep it up!" Welsh ordered as the never-ending attack continued on their position and then suddenly the creatures stopped dead in their tracks and turned to run back toward the lab.

The soldiers, confused and exhausted, held their fire and stood surveying what had just happened while ankle-deep in empty shell casings. Before them lay a scene of utter carnage. Hundreds of bodies of creatures were sprawled on top of each other in huge mounds. The soldiers stood shell shocked, unable to move. Steve dropped his pistol and sat on the ground with both hands on his head in utter shock.

How could they have possibly survived such an assault?

"Is everyone okay?" Welsh asked in a low voice.

No one answered and just nodded slowly. The disbelief was then replaced with nervous laughter as the men began hugging each other realizing how close they came to death.

"Boys we may have a hell of a fight headed our way," Montgomery said looking his men over, "We are the last line of defense for her to get this gate closed. Otherwise the air force is going to level this building in fifteen minutes. It's up to us."

"We're ready sir," Parks said laying his machine gun on the ground and taking position behind it.

"That we are," Townes said taking a knee raising his rifle.

The rest of the eight soldiers followed suit.

"Alright then. It's an honor to fight beside each and every one of you," Montgomery said

taking a position beside of Townes, "Make sure you're quick on that radio for the boys outside to deploy that flare to call off the air strike."

"I got it sir," Townes said confidently.

A vicious growl erupted from the tunnel in front of them.

"Here we go gentlemen hold your fire," Montgomery ordered.

With a loud shriek creatures began pouring out of the tunnel in droves.

"Fire at will!" shouted the captain.

The chasm erupted with the roar of gunfire. This startled Hopper who was staying quiet

trying to let El concentrate. El herself had made significant progress on the portal but was still giving it all her might. Down below the fight was becoming more desperate.

"They're too many of them!" Townes shouted.

"Just keep firing!" Parks shouted reloading his machine gun.

"N-No!" cried a private as he was overpowered by two of the creatures.

"Keep Firing! Pour it on them!" Montgomery ordered through the deafening sound, "Use your grenades!"

"Ahhhh!" screamed a corporal as he pulled a grenade to his chest while being attacked by four creatures.

"Goddammit!" Parks screamed as he ran out of ammunition and drew his sidearm firing as fast as he could before being overwhelmed.

Three more soldiers were overpowered leaving Townes and Montgomery alone.

Above El was almost out of energy. She could feel her body weakening. She remembered what her sister had taught her. She dug deep into her mind and thought of Dr. Brenner, of her mother, and of Mike. This sent her into a rage that made her lift into the air. She extended both arms into the air and with blood pouring out of her nose the gate closed with a bang and she collapsed into Hoppers hands.

"You did great kid, really great," Hopper said cradling her.

He then remembered the bombing raid and looked down at his watch, less than two minutes left. He looked down looking for the captain and saw a scene of utter carnage. Bodies of soldiers and creatures were strewn everywhere. He laid El down on the floor of the lift and lowered them down to the bottom of the chasm. He waded through the bodies of the slain creatures before coming to Townes' body with the radio still on his back. It was then he heard someone coughing. He looked to his right and saw Montgomery laying in a pool of blood. His left leg was missing below the knee.

Quickly he removed the radio from Townes and went to the Captain's side placing a tourniquet around his leg.

"Captain listen to me there's one minute left until the bombers are gonna be here you have

to tell me how to cancel them!" Hopper begged.

"H-Help me w-with the mic," Montgomery said.

Hopper picked up the mic, placed it to the captain's ear, and pressed the toggle switch.

"C-command this is O-Oscar Three M-Mike. G-Gate is closed, Building secured."

"Roger Oscar Three Mike, airstrike recalled. Command out," the radio screeched.

"Ready, Aim, Fire!"

Hopper couldn't help but jump at the loud retort of the seven rifles. El squeezed his hand and looked up at him reassuringly.

"Ready, Aim, Fire!"

He looked over the crowd surrounding the coffin. He saw the familiar faces of Mike, Dustin, Lucas, and Max. He saw the Byers' standing together and Nancy standing next to Steve.

"Ready, Aim, Fire!"

All of these familiar faces and he found himself going back to a week ago when they all could very well be dead if it wasn't for the leadership of this man they were here to lay to rest.

"Present Arms!"

He saw the men in uniform, some familiar, slowly raising their hands in a salute to one of their own. He heard the lone bugler play that all too familiar tune and the snap of the cloth of the flag as the soldiers

folded it over the coffin. He felt tears welling up in his eyes.

"Order Arms!"

"On behalf of the president of the United States and a grateful nation, please accept this flag as a token of your loved ones' sacrifice to his country. I am deeply sorry for your loss Mrs. Montgomery," The Colonel said giving her a folded American flag before saluting her.

"You know it's kind of ironic you and me are here with kids of our own at the ball," Hopper said to Joyce jokingly by their cars in front of the school.

"I'm just glad it's all over Jim," she said putting her head on his chest.

"Yeah, me too," he said putting his arm around her, "Me too."

"At least it's not just the snow ball anymore," she laughed.

"That's right it's the Captain Thomas Montgomery Memorial Snow Ball now," He said with a smile.

"That really was a great thing you did naming it after him Hop," Joyce said looking up at his eyes.

"You think so?" he said, his eyes meeting hers.

Leaning forward she softly kissed him on the lips and whispered, "Yes I think so."

The End

For Trinity, Cody, and CJ